

I, Grady Bryant, declare as follows:

1. I am currently a court security officer employed by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. I live in Oakhurst, California and work in Fresno and Yosemite, California.
2. On February 6, 2023, I approached Assistant Federal Defender Benjamin Gerson at the Yosemite Courthouse because I am interested in the BASE jumping case and had information that I thought was important.
3. I previously worked as a Law Enforcement Ranger for the National Park Service from 1985 through 2005. During that time, I worked in the Valley District and did front country patrol in Yosemite Valley. The Chief Ranger was Roger Rudolph.
4. During my time as a ranger, Yosemite National Park prohibited BASE jumping. Apprehending BASE jumpers was part of my duties as a ranger.
5. Early on in my career as a ranger I remember there was talk of trying to work with BASE jumpers so that they could get a permit to jump legally. However, those ideas faded and quickly and a rivalry between the BASE jumpers and the rangers developed. Yosemite National Park assumed that BASE jumpers would not comply with a permit system. Rather than working to develop a permit system, the rangers assumed BASE jumpers would never be open to it and that they would continue to break the law.
6. Yosemite National Park adopted an aggressive policy of arresting and citing BASE jumpers. Many rangers considered it a "challenge" to outsmart BASE jumpers. The base jumpers also tried to evade law enforcement rangers. A culture of division developed.
7. BASE jumpers would parachute at night or in marginal conditions to evade rangers. They would also use flashlights and walkie-talkies to signal that the coast was clear of rangers before a jump. Similarly, the rangers would try to outsmart the BASE jumpers. David Neid, who worked on horse patrol, was instructed by his superiors to set up nighttime patrol in the Meadow at specific time and locations for the express purpose of catching BASE jumpers.
8. Yosemite National Park's approach to BASE jumping was very different than its approach to hang gliding or rock climbing. ~~I tried to get to know rock climbers because rangers would need their help for search and rescue operations. While I did not agree with everything climbers did, we~~

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~~had a good rapport for the most part.~~ Hang gliders were allowed a permit but they had to demonstrate some proficiency and use approved equipment. The BASE jumping community was never able to comply with the requirements of the Park service and the Park service never was able to establish the same rapport or common ground with the BASE jumpers in the same way.

9. I did not take apprehending BASE jumpers as a personal mission, but it was the park's enforcement policy at the time. Over the years I watched the climbing and BASE jumping communities change. I believe both sports have matured and they are no longer as rowdy or stubborn as they once were. In addition, BASE jumping and rock climbing are well known now, and they are not the same spectacle that they were when they were new sports.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

March 7 2023


Grady Bryant